

Proclamation 6393 of December 13, 1991

Year of Clean Water, 1992

Clean Water Month, 1992

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Water is essential to every form of life on Earth. Indeed, this vital substance unites our planet's ecosystems, the miraculous yet fragile relationships in nature that sustain each other as well as all human activity. Recognizing the importance of our precious water resources, the United States has made a firm commitment to protecting their physical, chemical, and biological integrity. This year, the 20th anniversary of the Clean Water Act reminds us that we are all stewards of our water resources, and, as such, we are responsible for their preservation and wise use.

Since the enactment of the Clean Water Act in 1972, we have achieved remarkable improvements in many of our Nation's water resources. Twenty years ago, less than half of America's rivers supported fish and shellfish or provided wildlife habitat. Fishing and swimming were restricted in many areas, and drinking water supplies were threatened. Today, however, nearly three-fourths of the Nation's waters support these uses, and many others have significantly improved in quality. Fish and waterfowl have returned to many of our rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

We have taken great strides during the past two decades, primarily by controlling pollution from sewage treatment plants and industrial facilities. Recent advances in science and technology have enabled us to engage in more effective studies of water pollution—its causes and its effects. These studies, which have often revealed the magnitude of previously underestimated problems, have led to more vigorous and innovative antipollution measures. At the same time, public awareness of the importance of clean water has also increased; now there is more support than ever for protecting and enhancing water quality.

While we can take pride in this progress, many challenges remain. Urban and industrial growth are creating additional sources of pollution while placing increased demands on limited water resources. Contaminated runoff from farmlands as well as city streets is, all too often, degrading our waters and damaging ecosystems. Scientists continue to detect unacceptable levels of pollutants in many bodies of water and in the tissues of finfish and shellfish. All Americans must continue to work together to protect our water resources and the wildlife that depends on them.

We have already discerned the need for new and innovative solutions. Indeed, today we know that the health of aquatic ecosystems must be examined holistically, to determine how various forms of human activity affect water quality. We know that we must protect entire watersheds that feed into our rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. We also recognize that, by preventing pollution at the source, we can protect watersheds and avoid the high economic and environmental costs of treating wastes and restoring ecosystems after pollution has already oc-

curred. Moreover, experience has shown us that our actions must be based on sound science.

The 20th anniversary of the Clean Water Act marks an important milestone in the history of American environmental protection. However, just as water links each of our planet's ecosystems, water pollution recognizes no boundaries. All Americans and their representatives in all levels of government must work together to promote wise stewardship of this, our "water planet." We must also foster greater cooperation in the international community.

As an expression of our national commitment to these goals, the Congress, by Public Law 101-424, has designated 1992 as the "Year of Clean Water" and October 1992 as "Clean Water Month."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim 1992 as the Year of Clean Water and October 1992 as Clean Water Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this year and month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities. I also ask my fellow Americans to join in setting examples of environmental stewardship in our daily lives.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixteenth.

GEORGE BUSH

Proclamation 6394 of December 16, 1991

Year of Thanksgiving for the Blessings of Liberty, 1991

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Thomas Jefferson once noted that the only firm basis of a nation's liberties is the "conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are . . . the gift of God." By observing the bicentennial of our Bill of Rights as a Year of Thanksgiving for the Blessings of Liberty, we not only give honor where it is due but also reaffirm the moral and spiritual foundation on which this great Republic rests.

Our Nation's Founders were men of faith and conviction, and it was a biblically inspired view of man that led them to declare "that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." The ratification of our Bill of Rights in December 1791 signalled their determination to uphold in law these timeless words from our Declaration of Independence.

Our Bill of Rights guarantees, among other basic liberties, freedom of speech and of the press, as well as freedom of religion and association; it recognizes the right to keep and bear arms; and it prohibits unreasonable search and seizure of a person's home, papers, or possessions. The Bill of Rights also states that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, and it establishes funda-